

**Public Safety Committee
November 6, 2003
2 p.m.
Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Approved

Present: B. Blanchard, M. Robertson, K. Herrera, G. Totman, L. McBean
Staff: S. Whicher, K. Leinthall, G. Dentes, J. Hughes, S. Robinson, L. Shurtleff, P. Meskill, S. Cook, R. Stolp
Guests: O. Mack, OAR; A. Tutino, Ithaca Journal, Kavita Pawria, Law Fellow, Integrated Domestic Violence Court

Called to Order

Ms. Blanchard called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of July 31, September 2, 4, 8, 30, October 2 and 16, 2003

It was MOVED by Mr. Totman, seconded by Ms. McBean, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the minutes of the meetings listed above with the changes suggested by Legislators Robertson and Herrera.

Changes to the Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda:

Resolution No. - Consolidation of the City of Ithaca and County of Tompkins Department of Emergency Response Dispatch Functions.

Discussion of Committee Goals for 2003 was withdrawn from the agenda.

Assigned Counsel vs. Public Defender's Office

Mr. Stolp reported he has not received any additional information on the subject of assigned counsel vs. a public defender's office since the subject was last discussed by the Committee. Ms. Blanchard said she would work with the County Administrator to use NYSAC resources to request information from other counties.

Ms. Hughes reported the Committee on the RFP (Request for Proposals) for contracting with two courts (Ithaca City and Dryden Town Courts) was released a couple of weeks ago; however, no proposals have been received as of this date. She said these are the two largest courts in Tompkins County and if people were centralized in those courts it may save the County money and time. Mr. Stolp said if any proposals are received he would operate these courts on a six-month trial basis. Ms. Hughes stated responses are due by December 2nd. Ms. Herrera asked that the County Attorney review the contract to see if it complies with the County's local law relating to sexual orientation.

Impacts of Proposed 2004 Tompkins County Budget

Ms. Hughes reported on the budget of the Assigned Counsel Program and stated \$650,000 was budgeted for 2003; at this time current expenses are \$678,000. She projects expenses will be approximately \$750,000 at year-end. This is due, in part, to many high profile crimes in 2003.

Ms. Hughes said the Department downgraded a position in 2003; this will mean a tremendous amount of more work for Mr. Stolp and her. They will also be integrating the new Integrated Domestic Violence Court into the workload. Mr. Stolp said he does not believe that will place a major burden on the Department; however, they will need to wait until the court is fully underway before they will know for sure. Ms. Hughes said their priorities will remain the same; however, it may take them longer to assign attorneys to individuals in jail.

At this time the Committee recognized Mr. Stolp and thanked him for his 30-year anniversary of association with Tompkins County.

District Attorney

Mr. Dentes said every time staffing changes in the District Attorney's Office he has to reassess the allocation of attorneys to courts. There are nine towns, two villages, and one city court to cover. There will also be an Integrated Domestic Violence Court next year, which will need to be covered. Mr. Dentes said in 2004 there will be 26 courts at which the District Attorney must have a presence. He stated the drug courts are the only area he has flexibility in and has already announced the D.A.'s Office will withdraw from those courts to the extent that is possible if the proposed budget is adopted.

Sheriff's Department

Mr. Meskill stated 2004 will be the third year the County Legislature has reduced Department's budget in an amount equivalent to one deputy sheriff position. He referred to a staffing analysis that was conducted by Department of Criminal Justice this year and said that concluded that based on the current workload, the Department needs ten more positions. Mr. Meskill said the reduction in the 2004 budget will result in less public education and less pro-active law enforcement. He said they would work with the budget they are given and will provide the best service possible to Tompkins County. In answer to a question, Mr. Meskill explained that we can house 16-19 year-olds at the Jail they are classified as "juveniles." A "juvenile offender" is someone younger than 16 years who is charged with a serious crime. They cannot be housed here and often have to be transported long distances for approved housing.

Department of Emergency Response

Mr. Shurtleff reported the Department is currently at minimum staffing levels and any further cuts would impair their ability to function. He expressed concern over areas of the budget, such as radio maintenance and equipment. Mr. Shurtleff said if a major event were to happen that resulted in a need to replace equipment, he would need to request Contingency Funds to replace that equipment. He explained the high volume of calls the Department receives and said over time they have become dependent on assistance and support from the Sheriff's Department. He said there have been times when there have been delays in non-emergency calls of up to twenty minutes. He noted that at this time they are still able to respond to all emergency calls immediately.

Probation Department - Budget Impact

Ms. Leinthall said that this time she cannot predict the impacts the Probation Department will face as a result of budget reductions. She stated there may be some changes in staff assignments that may be difficult to make because of the intensity of some programs, but she will keep the Committee informed if that happens. She said the Department will move forward and do the best it can with the budget that has been given to them. Ms. Leinthall said they have lost a number of positions over the last few years. She is concerned that a number of staff are getting tired by the intense level of involvement with clients; this is a higher burnout job. She is worried about additional demands that will go with the Integrated Domestic Violence Court, and hopes that State will fund a Coordinator position. Judge Rowley told her there might be 20 cases more or less, in the IDV Court.

OAR

Mr. Mack reported the Agency is already short-staffed. The proposed reduction in County funding for 2004 would result in a further cut in staff, which he will likely recommend be applied to his own salary. Mr. Mack said he is looking forward to the Agency's move in December to a new location even though some expenses will increase. He thanked the Committee for the support the County has shown to O.A.R. and said he looks forward to providing continued service.

Update - Integrated Domestic Violence Court

Ms. Blanchard reported on activities that have taken place relating to the Integrated Domestic Violence Court. She said last Friday there was a meeting of the stakeholders where Judge Rowley reiterated that it was being established by administrative order of the court system and the official opening would be in February or March. The actual start date for the court will be December 15 when any violation of a family court order will automatically transfer into this court. The court will follow a new petition calendar and the judges will alternate presiding over the court. The Sheriff's Office will be providing security for the court and will be reimbursed by the State court system. The initial caseload will be restricted to the City and Town of Ithaca and after July 1 it will be expanded to the entire County. The grant that has been discussed by this Committee has been obtained and will support the startup costs of the court and monies for a Resource Coordinator and a Victim Advocate for two years; administrative assistance will be provided by existing court staff. Ms. Blanchard said more violations will be caught and noted and the whole issue of domestic violence will be treated more seriously. Local impacts that are possible are more men in the DOORS program, about 20 more Probation cases, and more people in jail.

Kavita Pawria, Law Fellow assigned to the Integrated Domestic Violence Court, reported a meeting was held today at which there were representatives from the Office of Court Administration. She said the Resource Coordinator and Victim Advocate will likely be hired within the next two months and will exist for two years as stated in the grant. The Victim Advocate will be a full-time position and discussions are still taking place about whether the Resource Coordinator will also be full-time. Ms. Blanchard said she had a discussion last week with Judge Rowley who stated he felt that because these are court positions that they would likely continue after the grant runs out. There are no additional funds for Probation in the State grant, although there is some money for training. Ms. Blanchard said she will keep the Committee informed as more information becomes available.

STOP-DWI

Our STOP Grant expires at the end of 2003. We have applied for new money but it might not come until April, 2004.

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It was MOVED by Mr. Totman, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Legislature:

RESOLUTION NO. 236 - ADOPTION OF TOMPKINS COUNTY FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) MUTUAL AID PLAN

WHEREAS, mutual aid is the organized, supervised, coordinated, cooperative, reciprocal provision of assistance in which personnel, equipment, and physical facilities of emergency services, regardless of type or size, are utilized for fire or other public emergency in which the services of emergency personnel are required throughout the State of New York and contiguous areas, and

WHEREAS, County Law Section 225-a establishes the procedures by which a County Government shall develop a Mutual Aid Plan (Plan), and General Municipal Law Section 209 and Public Health Law Article 30 further delineates the composition of such Mutual Aid Plan(s), and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County first adopted a Mutual Aid Plan on September 12, 1955, periodically updating the Plan thereafter, and most recently in 1993, and

WHEREAS, the Fire, Disaster and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Advisory Board has this year thoroughly reviewed, updated, and recommended a revised Tompkins County Fire and EMS Mutual Aid Plan to the County Legislature, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That the Legislature hereby adopts the Fire and EMS Mutual Aid Plan dated October 2003, and directs the Director of the Department of Emergency Response to submit this Plan for admission into the New York State Fire Mobilization and Mutual Aid Plan, and into such comparable New York State EMS Mobilization Plan.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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It was MOVED by Mr. Totman, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Legislature:

**RESOLUTION NO. 246 - CONSOLIDATION OF THE CITY OF ITHACA AND COUNTY
OF TOMPKINS DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE
DISPATCH FUNCTIONS**

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the public to have all dispatch positions centrally located in the Emergency Response Dispatch Center under the direction and control of the Department of Emergency Response, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety and Budget and Capital Committees, That the City of Ithaca has agreed to reimburse the County the amounts listed in the chart below, and said reimbursement shall be a decrease in the Tompkins County distribution of the sales tax to the City, and the sales tax agreement shall be amended to reflect this change as summarized in the chart below,

RESOLVED, further, That five full-time, 40 hour-per-week positions be created in the title of Emergency Services Dispatcher (12-551) in the Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response effective July 1, 2004, and

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or his designee is authorized to sign any agreements and other documents necessary to achieve this transfer.

DATE	NUMBER OF DISPATCHERS COVERED BY AGREEMENT	ANNUAL PAYMENT TO COUNTY FROM CITY
Year 1: 7/1/04-12/31/04	4	\$73,500
Year 2: 1/1/05- 12/31/05	4	\$147,000
Year 3: 1/1/06-12/31/06	4	\$147,000
Year 4: 1/1/07-12/31/07	4	\$147,000
Year 5: 1/1/08-12/31/08	4	\$147,000
12/31/08 Balloon Payment	1	\$287,195: Cost of 1 dispatcher at the County rate with fringes for 5 years at Year 1 rate
1/1/09 - on-going term	5	\$180,000: Payment for 5 dispatchers

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Sheriff's Department

Boat Patrol

Mr. Meskill explained the Department's current patrol boat is a 1995 21 Boston Whaler. The boat does not afford any protection from the weather or secure areas to stow the Department's gear and is aging considerably. The boat will require necessary repairs to the steering system, modifications to secure gear and radios, afford some level of protection from the weather and a new outboard motor. The estimate for making necessary repairs to the boat is \$20,000. The other option is to examine the purchase of a new boat and trailer. The net (conservative) cost of a new boat after resale of the existing boat and state reimbursement of 47% would be \$17,490. It was the consensus of the Committee to have the Sheriff move forward with the purchase of a new boat.

Jail Transition Program

Sheriff Meskill reported on the Jail Transition Program and stated the Department has been working with the Lansing School District and Workforce Development on this program that will begin the first of 2004. The program is paid for by federal funding. They have been trying to set up a new program that involves a combination of life skills and occupational skills. Connie Sowards of Workforce Development is writing the plan and the first step in the process of surveying current population and evaluation of the program by both the Sheriff's Department and Workforce Development. Mr. Meskill said at least in the beginning, it will be a small program and will model a case management type of program. Anyone in the Jail who wants to will be able to participate. Workforce Development will follow-up with people after they leave the Jail.

Ms. Herrera requested that the Sheriff make a presentation on this program to the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee.

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. McBean, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Legislature:

RESOLUTION NO. 247 - APPROPRIATION OF UNSPENT FUNDS - SHERIFF'S OFFICE

WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Office Jail budgeting unit has \$47,514 in unspent certified 2002 rollover funds, and

WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Office has a need for replacing an older vehicle with a newer vehicle because of additional transportation requirements such as court ordered transports to rehabilitation, transports to other county jails for board outs, and increased transportation orders, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety and Budget and Capital Committees, That the Director of Finance be authorized to appropriate \$25,000 to the vehicle line (described below) and the remaining \$22,514 be returned to the County General Fund:

APPROPRIATION:

FROM:	A599	General Fund Balance	\$25,000
TO:	3150.52231	Vehicle (Corrections)	\$25,000

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Herrera, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Legislature:

**RESOLUTION NO. - HONORING JOHN BEACH FOR SERVICE TO TOMPKINS
COUNTY AS STOP-DWI COORDINATOR**

WHEREAS, John Beach has served faithfully as Tompkins County STOP-DWI Coordinator for fourteen and one-half years and, prior to that, as an employee of the Probation Department, and

WHEREAS, his service to STOP-DWI dates back over twenty years to the planning committee that developed the program followed by many years as both a member of the STOP-DWI Advisory Board and as its Chairman, and

WHEREAS, as Coordinator of the program, John instituted many initiatives to make the community aware of the consequences of drinking and driving and worked with colleagues in the field to create a victims panel in Tompkins County, and

WHEREAS, the energy and commitment he has brought to the program has been inspiring to all who have worked with him in this important public safety arena, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That the Tompkins County Legislature commends John for his efforts and wishes him the best as he pursues new goals and opportunities.

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Approval of Appointment(s)

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Herrera, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the following appointment(s) and submit to the full Legislature:

Criminal Justice Advisory/Alternatives to Incarceration Board

Peter Meskill - Sheriff; term expires December 31, 2006

M. John Sherman - County Court Judge; term expires December 31, 2006

Patricia Buechel - Probation Director (Designee) representative; term expires December 31, 2006

George Dentes - District Attorney; term expires December 31, 2006

Traffic Safety Board

Peter Meskill - Sheriff; term expires December 31, 2006

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.